Combine Harvesters: Breganze is the European trading place

Big rise in production figures since last September thanks to agreements with AGCO
Dear reader: I am happy to announce that “Laverda’s shareholders have chosen us as the perfect place to concentrate the combines market in Europe”, especially since we will shortly host the production of new models built in our plant in Denmark. This is of crucial importance to our business, which has grown thanks to the company’s good managing performance and the development in all harvesting machinery sector activities. The ability to quickly react and adapt to various market conditions, also shown in tough times like today, played an important role to have us chosen as the perfect place. This is a big and important project that not only involves moving the machine production of “8 walker and hybrid” combines to Breganze headquarters, but also fully integrating the combines in the Laverda “system”. The whole development process of our new products, including the process related to new machineries lines, will take place at Breganze. This is possible thanks to upgrading our planning, prototype building, lab and field testing facilities. Starting in September, all of these machines will be produced at Laverda. Production will be progressive and it will follow the current 5 and 6 walker technique, manufacturing most of the main parts in-house. In the same way, calibrated bars of the rolling belt feeding system will be produced in-house, utilising the brand new assembling system for free flow bar production. Combines assembling will take place on the current assembling line, and production will be organised according to model mix. Assembling rules for productive efficiency will be respected, but in the same day 8 walker or hybrid machines will be produced, together with 5 or 6 walker machines of any type, fixed, or self-leveling. Functional groups assembling will be done, as we do today, to the side of the principal assembly line. We are planning on extending the related sections; other productions will be moved to different sites, in order to build new machinery pre-assembly stations. New assembly islands were built due to special demands of the new machinery family, for example for hybrid rotor groups, or conventional harvester boxes. We are working to have kai-zen principles - that stand at the core of our productive logistics - to be applied right from the start, and we are committed to design production methods according to this philosophy. Laverda’s experience is crucial, and it is combined with the enthusiasm our personnel are known for. We take this challenge as a great opportunity to show our company’s true potential. Like we said before, production processes are being revised and upgraded in order to prepare our facilities for this new activity. Our new robot, which complements our current island for large welded components production, has been ready to start full operation since the beginning of this year. New upgrades for rotary organs balance have been installed; as well as a tower robot depot for handling smaller pieces. At the same time ongoing works are taking place in all areas of the plant and the design of the site’s sections is undergoing some modifications. The works are not causing any negative impact on current production. However, in some sections, even for shorter periods of time, we might get the impression of walking into a totally different place. At the same time, we are implementing a training program for all factory personnel in charge of new machinery production. Maximum quality guarantee for all Breganze products is our prime priority. We are making huge resource investments to reach our goal. The same dynamism is taking place at Fella: after the advances at the latest Hannover Agricultural Show, the production of large extension machines has taken a faster pace, as in the case of the TH 13010 tedders, or TS 880 PRO double rotor central rakes. These are high productivity machines with maximum adaptability to diverse terrain conditions, designed for transport time reduction - which is a crucial factor when dealing with machinery costs. The company is making significant investments in this field - similar to Laverda headquarters - in order to provide better conditions for a speedy recovery, as soon as market demand grows once again. And that’s what we all wish for. We hope for a harvest season with positive surprises, showing signs of a general recovery of the agriculture sector.
The “reds” are in good health despite market crisis

Laverda has an annual turnover of €93 million, and more than 740 combines have been sold. Fella has also produced positive results

In 2009, despite the sharp drop in demand that affected the markets, and the widespread climate of uncertainty caused by the continuing economic and financial crisis, we had a yearly turnover of €93 million; an extremely significant result, in view of the international situation. Laverda SPA’s shareholder meeting has recently approved the 2009 fiscal year turnover; a year in which thanks to the specialisation in combine production, La verda - a joint venture between Argo Italy and AGCO USA - successfully sold 742 combine harvesters. This is a significant number even if lower than the 2008 sale figures. It is important to remember that 2008 was an exceptional year due to extremely favourable market conditions.

Over the past year, the difficulties of end customers to access credit and agricultural products low price did not help sustain the sector, forcing Laverda to a careful review and reduction of the estimated target sales. “It's all thanks to Laverda’s flexibility”, said managing director Mario Scapin, “that we managed to sort out the situation successfully”. We have learnt to adapt to market changing requirements quickly, which enabled us to achieve a positive before tax result, with percentage values that are in line with the trend of earlier years. Current fiscal year provisions suggest acting with caution, since we can still suffer from the many factors that limit investments in new agriculture machinery seen over the past year. Central European markets show significant subsequent contractions, while Russia and dollar-related areas present some weak reactivation signals. “Under these circumstances, we foresee a short-term minimal positive turnover, as a result of innovations added to products offered in the current sales campaign. We foresee a more positive result in the medium term, partly also owing to the contribution derived from moving the production of “8 walker and hybrid” combines to Breganze headquarters. A further positive factor for Laverda is determined by limited stocks of combines at the headquarters of importers and dealers. The distribution philosophy at Breganze has always consisted in considering the sale as completed once the combine is at our customer’s home.

2009 has been a complex year for Fella-Werke GmbH - a subsidiary of Laverda that specialises in tedder production at Feucht, Bavaria - due to the general crisis and the price of milk. But at the same time, Reinhard Brunner, managing director at Feucht, said that: “Fella has ended the fiscal year with a positive result and a significant reduction in finished products in stock, both at headquarters and in sales networks”. 

Laverda SPA Archive
“Pietro Laverda” Historical Archive
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Sicily: rediscovering legumes

Laverda and dealer Volatile have won the bid to accelerate the recovery of lentils and chickpeas crops

Legumes are to be rediscovered and revaluated in Sicily. A very specific project called “recovery and revaluation of dry grain legumes for food in Sicily” will redevelop alternative resources, following a careful territory study. The project is promoted by the Alto Belice Soat 64 de Monreale Palermo District (Palermo) that is a part of the Regional Advisory for agriculture and food resources. The idea materialised with the intention of rediscovering food products in the niche Sicilian soil, looking in particular for the revival of legumes such as chickpeas, lentils, chickling peas and beans. Before the last war, legumes represented the main dish in insular country houses, a good alternative to meat, which at the time was exclusive to nobles and the upper classes. After the 50’s, contrariwise, meat was widely used in everyday diet, causing cereal production to increase over legume farming. Currently, as a consequence, Sicily’s legume import has reached considerable amounts. Therefore, in order to reverse the trend, the Alto Belice District made a call for tenders. Here the alliance between Laverda technologies and local manpower was essential: Laverda, through its local dealer Volatile Bernardos SNC, won the bidding outrunning the competition with experience, competitiveness, and above all, versatility of products, showing supremacy with the delivery of two Laverda AL Rev combines to bailies, in this case, Diquattro Doroteza agriculture and Riggi Seedbed SRL. These two companies, both leaders in high quality seed production and selection, are also involved in the cultivation of lentils, chickpeas and other varieties of food vegetables. For a long time in Sicily, Breganze has proven ideal for farmers and third parties. Laverda has found in the Volatile Bernardo dealer a valid commercial partner that has contributed to its success, achieving significant market share, close to 70 percent of sales among existing brands. Today the antonomasia of a self-leveling combine is actually Laverda. The first part of the recuperation process for dry grain legumes for food has finished: in the summer the red machines will be seen under operation, able to climb to unthinkable places for mowing and harvesting the work of a whole season. Laverda AL Rev combines, appropriately prepared, will allow good Sicilian legume tasting, which will surely conquer palates, including discerning palates.
Forty years of affection for Laverda, which started during the honeymoon!

Grasselli, from Umbria with love

“Even on our honeymoon Laverda was on his mind” That’s what Mrs Mirella must have thought over thirty years ago, when she had to anticipate her return from her honeymoon as her newly married husband had to attend a training course organised by the company based in Breganze.

Avelio Grasselli, her husband, couldn’t wait to discover all of the features of the brand new and recently purchased M 100 combine.

And since then, his love for his wife and for Laverda has grown stronger with time. The arrival of his two children - today side by side with their father managing the company based in Colombella, Perugia - and the growth of the Laverda fleet are proof of that.

The M 100 from 1971 - the one that interrupted their honeymoon was purchased as a ‘personal machine’ coming a few years after the first M 84 of 1969. This machine started their harvesting activity and was the first one of a group that grew over time. Some other Laverdas joined in among them a 2350 MCS LS (2001), a 255 LCS LS (2009), and the last purchase a straw-cutter AL Rev as a preparation for the next season.

This latest investment shows that the company remains true to its philosophy despite going through a challenging economic moment.

The company, that started off as Fratelli Grasselli in 1965, has a long tradition in the agriculture business. Breganze’s precious machines boosted this history, as many of the machines that joined the company’s fleet were from Laverda: one M 120 in 1977, one M 132 in 1980, one 3700 in 1984, one 3790 in 1987, and one L 521 in 1993. There was a TX 34 and an 8060 that were also part of the company’s fleet.

Today at Grasselli SNC there is a true passion for high performance and versatile machines, with a 250-hour production per year per machine to thresh a wide variety of products: 200 hectares of barley, 500 of wheat, 150 of corn, 100 of sunflower and also swede rape and sorghum. All this did not have any significant influence on the company budget, despite having some machinery transformation costs - to switch from working on one product to another - of around 400 euros, and a 18 to 20 litre per hour average fuel consumption.

According to Avelio Graselli these figures represent the machine’s optimal performance, especially when dealing with thresher agility, threshing quality and how well these machines react to the Umbria-based company’s performance requirements.

Passion for the “reds” carved on the skin

Tattooed from neck down to the back, Loris Luciani promises not to ever forget that he has a “Laverda red” heart beating on his chest.

From his love of agriculture he has dedicated two wheat spikes and a sunflower head that complement the L, Laverda’s logo, tattooed on his neck.

There’s nothing left to say, Loris: this is true passion!
On February 1, Sven Niels, 35, joined the sales department at Fella-Werke GmbH, as export manager. Replacing Van Mierlo, who is soon to retire, Niels directs the course of the company in key European markets.

Niels, a Schleswig-Holstein born engineer, looking to extend his technical expertise took courses at Oldenburg / Ostfriesland / Wilhelmshaven University of Applied Sciences, and boasts a long experience in fodder harvesters. He has experience acting as export and marketing manager; and at Fella, Niels is the export manager in charge of strategically important markets of northern Europe and Spain. Niels joined the sales team in order to help promote international growth at the Feucht company.

In 2002, he started working for B. Strautman & Söhne GmbH & Co. KG for the sales and promotion department, and took up the post of marketing manager, as well as that of export manager in 2009. These roles allowed him to gain important insight in the sector of fodder harvesters manufacturing.

“Despite tense market conditions, or actually as a consequence of that, we decided to expand the number of team members, and we are very satisfied of having found in Niels our new export manager. Niels has a strong experience in both agriculture and in tedder production”, said Stefan Sprock, export director at Fella- Werke GmbH. With a new and stronger team, Fella aims at expanding its international market growth further.
France, a market open to innovations

Agricultural machines at the heart of a sector that expects production growth and eco-friendly practices

For the last 60 years, agriculture mechanisation has contributed to twentieth century farming evolution providing answers and solutions necessary to guarantee food safety. Now in the twenty-first century, it is important to identify the major players capable of meeting the needs of French agriculture.

An industry under constant innovation

Today the industry’s future and performance are more closely related to the technology and innovation capacity than the sector of agriculture machinery is able to provide.

Adaptation to cultivation and harvesting equipment is, and will be, an important factor for conservation and duration of the industry, considering that population growth goes hand in hand with farming lands receding.

To make modernisation achievable, the necessary needs to be made available and public administration put to work, so that the agriculture sector can obtain fair consideration in the political debate and budget preparation.

In the same way, agriculture machinery producers and dealers will have to show responsible professionalism and the ability to preserve farming models, aiming at a rational exploitation of farming lands and keeping a service that is close enough and sensible to man and land requirements. They are both essential for safeguarding the environment and searching satisfactory economic results.

Solid perspectives

In order to keep up with sustainable and durable development, environmental safety and energy saving the agriculture mechanisation sector is continuing its efforts in terms of research and development, safety and training.

The conservation of efficient and rational farming depends on crops’ profitability and the ability to anticipate market changes and demands as soon as possible.

The agriculture mechanisation industry, thanks to its innovation capacity, fully contributes to the economic competitiveness of modern agriculture capable of dealing with future demands.

The need for equipment and machinery, servicing needs and renovation are crucial to the French market, and the industry’s perspectives are solid in the short and long run.

The influence of the agriculture machinery sector for its food and nutritional functions, as well as for respect for the landscape and the environment, speak for a sector that is at the heart of an innovative and strategic agriculture industry for the future of France.

Fabrice Rondeau

“Laverda, values in the field” available on DVD

Created as part of a wide communication project between Laverda in collaboration with Canale Italia, the company’s new DVD “Values in the field” is now available. Laverda’s history is told through images and voices of the company. The DVD illustrates Laverda, its history, the company’s goal, current organization, production processes, machine production phases, the project giving origin to new products, marketing strategies, sales department organisation and distribution line...

The story of a living, pulsating business, the history of a company that creates “values” and puts them “on the field”.

Fabrice Rondeau
TechAgro, visit permit to the Czech Republic

Thanks to its own dealer Biso Cz, the recent Brno TechAgro Show has been an exceptional showcase for Laverda. The machinery was well displayed in an exclusive 1,850 square meter enclosure, where Biso and its partner P&L introduced a wide range of farming products and equipment, together with Breganze “reds”. Two machines were introduced, the 296 LCS LS featuring a 6-meter bar, and Biso swede rape kit; and the new M 306 Special Power, equipped with vario Biso bar part of the 6.5 VX series.

The show served as an important meeting point for customers and Laverda’s export manager, Andrea Ugatti, who stated that the business has made some relevant investments. Laverda’s customers will enjoy the benefits of a sales network for Breganze’s machinery, after-sales support, and spare parts replacement service that guarantees the best efficiency and customer service.

TechAgro, one of the most important shows in Central Europe, takes place every two years, with a 63 thousand square meter exhibition area. This year’s show featured 713 exhibitors from over 21 different countries, and data shows the presence of over one hundred thousand visitors.

The first pavilions, the older ones, go back to the 20’s, and today still represent the fulcrum of the exhibition centre.

Laverda lands on Albion beaches

DLC Equipment is the local “red” dealer for North Wales and North West England and Ireland

Laverda entered into a representation agreement with DLC Equipment in March. David Lloyd Contractors Ltd, based at Colwyn Bay, Conwy, North Wales, announced on its website to be honoured to have been chosen by Breganze. DLC Equipment will be the local dealer of the Breganze “reds” for North Wales and North West England and Ireland.

“Know-how, experience, and industrial abilities are at the basis of product development, and this allows Laverda to respond effectively and timely to the demands and requirements of a globalized market,” said David Jones, owner of DLC Equipment.

A focus on combines is what allowed the Breganze company to be internationally renown in the agriculture business, and David Jones immediately showed his eagerness to be a part of team Laverda.

DLC Equipment specialises in the distribution of farming machinery and equipment and is well prepared to offer a quick and efficient spare parts replacement support with a good selection of brands. The Conwy district is self-administered. It was founded in 1996 in compliance with the 1994 local government laws (Conwy), named after a local river, that flows from the South into a large estuary at Conwy. In the town of Conwy there is still the remains of a 12th Century castle which brings tourists from far and wide.
Laverda becomes popular in Slovakia

Since 2007 Laverda is being represented by VPP, based on Jelenec, at the heart of the farming region. The “reds” in the spotlight in two big trade events

Since 2007, Laverda is being represented by VPP in Slovakia, a company founded in 1994 by Jozef Szipina which over time has turned into a family-run business.

In 1995, VPP was importing Finnish Valtra tractors. Today the Slovakian company represents other companies from well-known brands - mainly Italian and Finnish, including Laverda, Dieci, Valtra, Junkkari, Kesla, Cabe, Faresin and Seppi M.

“As the markets we represented started to grow,” says Daniel Szipina, sales manager at VPP, “we were forced to move to a new larger office. For our headquarters we choose Jelenec, also due to the fact that, in the last few years, Nitra, a neighbouring city, has become Slovakia’s agricultural main centre as it is located at the heart of the country’s farming region. It is here that the main agriculture and farming mechanisation events take place. The country’s agriculture authorities are also based in Nitra, together with the Agriculture Slovakian University”.

At the same time VPP also started a commercial and service network throughout the Republic in order to improve the quality of service and to be more accessible to customers.

“This network is of crucial importance for our success,” says Szipina, “and has helped make our business more attractive to the eyes of producers of machinery, equipment, and technology for agriculture, forestry, and the maintenance of green spaces. We also have other branches as well as a central depot for spare parts support at Jelenec, and we are also ready to set up an office in Nitra with a permanent exhibition area. We also have sales and customer support offices in Kuprina, Ružomberok and Humenné”.

As mentioned before, in 2007, Laverda joined the group of brand names represented by VPP. In the early nineties, Laverda had marketed its own products in the Slovakian market, but the brand was later forgotten due to a lack of local branch offices for representation and customer support services. Everything has changed since 2007 and VPP has revived its customer support, placing Laverda back in the position it deserves in the Slovakian market.

“In order to be more widely known”, says Daniel Szipina, “we have taken part in many strategically chosen events since the beginning of our collaboration with Laverda, organising practical demonstrations involving wheat, sunflower and corn all reaping with a M 304 SP combine. In 2008 we visited the Laverda headquarters in Breganze with some potential customers and we are now planning some other visits that will take place shortly. We have also introduced Laverda’s brand, company and products to trade magazines, and industry trade fairs.

Last year in August we took part in the 36th edition of Agrokomplex, the agriculture and food industry international show, the oldest in Slovakia, and showed an M 304 SP. In October of the same year, we attended the Agrosalón trade fair - for agriculture machinery and equipment, forestry, and the safeguard of green spaces. All trade categories in Slovakia take part in the event, where we had a great chance to introduce our brands. On that occasion we introduced an M 304 and an M 306 SP on a large exhibition area that we had at our disposal”.

This year VPP is planning to open another area in its recently renovated business office five kilometres from Nitra, on the main West-East highway. A Laverda M 304 SP is on display at the site for customer demonstration purposes.

Apart from promoting and selling Laverda products, VPP has its own experienced sales and after-sales support team.

“This is our company’s heart, and we are ready to satisfy all of our customers’ needs, however complicated they may be”, says Szipina. “Therefore, in order to be always prepared and to be efficient, our staff have received regular training, which includes visits to Breganze. We know for sure that only high quality service and products can attract new customers and satisfy loyal customers. In this way, we have made our contribution to prepare the right conditions in the Slovakian Republic that Laverda’s brand and products deserve”.

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Support for high quality milk

In Bavaria, Fella supports the campaign for productive farms in southern Germany

Southern Germany promotes “Fair and Caring milk”. In Babaria and the surrounding areas, the campaign is managed by MSV Milchvermarktung Süddeutschland – a milk trading governing body of the milk producers’ organization of southern Germany Länder – and Laverda’s Bavarian subsidiary Fella-Werke GmbH, which specializes in hay-making machinery and equipment, is the first in line to support the campaign.

Feucht aims at offering support to its own customers by protecting the existence and conservation of traditional milk producing farms.

“The agriculture technology industry is aware of traditional milk farms’ current difficult situation,” explains Erhard Klamer, head of marketing and sales at German Fella. “This is the reason why we decided to support the project: with this campaign that supports family-run farms in the region, Fella is trying to help milk producers, i.e. our customers”.

“Fair and Caring milk” comes only from farms from Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and Hessen and is available at food producers markets such as Rewe and Tegut. The consumer receives healthy and high quality milk as a result of environmentally-friendly and sustainable policies. The project will offer benefits for regional agriculture milk producers and will help them support their present and future existence.

For this very reason, Fella uses “Fair and Caring milk” within its own visitor catering service. This helps Fella to show its strong focus on its customers sending out a clear message: the economy needs to guarantee fair payments to milk producing farms.
The global economic situation suggests caution and moderation on investments in all economic sectors. Laverda - a company with a close eye on the markets and well-respected for its strength, reliability and the low management costs of its combines - presents agribusiness operators with a whole new opportunity.

Thanks to the synergy arising from the joint venture agreement with the third-largest international group in agricultural mechanisation, US Agco Corporation, Breganze's product offer has been extended with the introduction of the new Axial Laverda ML 800 Ars combine. Every specialist will be able to evaluate the value of this project, aimed at agriculture and agricultural mechanisation professionals, who make their investments with a business vision for the future.

The product's attention to detail and its efficient technical accomplishment, together with an attractive design, make the ML 800 ARS a reference combine for those who pay special attention to the quality of threshed products. Now that the rice harvest is over we can provide some results: an output of 65% with very low energy consumption (0.4 litres of fuel per 100 lbs harvested rice) and high productivity under all conditions (320 lbs/hour).

Another important detail: the ML 800 Ars is always ready for any kind of product. There is no need to transform the machine to move from corn, to soya bean or rice; it can all be adjusted from inside the machine.

Warning to users: in case of entering the rice field during the humid season, we advise that you wear boots and attach chains to Laverda ML 800 if necessary...
The services

Technical support, always behind the “reds”

How is the 360 after-sales service organised for customers in Italy and all around the world

Laverda has always considered after-sales support a crucial part of its “mission”. Combine users in Italy and around the world consider this service a reference point for advice and indications, but it is primarily appreciated for its staff availability, as they realise how important it is to offer the appropriate support to customers that invest in an internationally recognised market.

The technical and spare-parts support service is quick and efficient. This is a strong point for customer satisfaction so that customers can have technical staff at their disposal. As well as offering assistance, our staff offer help and can also make suggestions about regular and end of season maintenance.

During the previous years, the technical support staff have been boosted by the addition of young people who have brought freshness, enthusiasm and dynamism to the team. These youngsters who received training by working side by side with specialised technicians with over twenty years of experience in field missions in Italy and abroad, are part of the new human resources ready to help - in the best possible way - customers who are getting more updated and demanding.

But how is the service organised? Three technical support managers deal with dealers and imports: Gianfranco Dal Santo is in charge of Eastern countries, Spain and Central and South America; Fabrizio Brazzale is in charge of Italy, France and Switzerland; and Paolo Mulinari, newly appointed as technical support manager after several years of specialisation, is in charge of Central and Southern Italy, as well as Northern European countries. Apart from acting as a reference for dealers and importers, the three managers are also in charge of spare parts and follow very closely the dealer technicians training and importers in their respective areas. Operators show great interest in training: as an example we can take 385 technicians from different parts of the world that attended Laverda courses during the 2008/2009 season.

Technical support is also in charge of manuals and warranties, managed by qualified and very experienced personnel.

Laverda’s spare part support started back in 2000, with young and dynamic staff, motivated by a great sense of belonging to the company. There is a team spirit within the parts reception personnel, pick-up department personnel with their forklifts always on the move, verifications and expeditions staff, they all operate with dynamism and in synchronisation which guarantees dealers and customers the best possible service, a factor that makes the difference. This also means offering support during weekends in harvest season, as well as providing on-line support with experienced personnel, capable of offering support even for machines that have been used for over thirty years. Silvano Vitacchio is an important player in this sense, with a great memory for spare parts, he is always used as reference by dealers and importers about spare parts of new and old machinery.

A strategic role that he has passed on to the programming and orders department, which deals with material delivery in a timely manner. The inspection service makes sure that the material delivered meets technical and quality requirements. Sales personnel, always available and extremely dynamic, are in charge of delivering orders as fast as possible.

The process as a whole, is a well managed team: when a part is not available, staff, always fast and easy to access, are in charge of replenishing supplies as soon as possible.

Another key point in the whole process is done by those that deal with pricing, to guarantee quality and competitiveness of original spare parts, in a market where a non-original part can cause many headaches.

Our job implies precision and availability for long business trips across Italy or around the world. For this reason, after thirty years of technical support, it is always rewarding meeting a customer who greets us kindly, as we have always been close to them on the fields, and always with great availability. I am personally convinced that the feeling of belonging is a very special value to be transmitted and cultivated through the years. I see this being present and strong at Breganze, and this, I believe, is a good guarantee for us all.

Pietro Dal Santo
Factory Open Day, Breganze at the centre

June 13th’s event stretches over the province: Laverda’s facilities are being upgraded to make room for new products

“Factory Open Day” is back with great style. The fifth edition of this event took place on June 13th, and as always, Laverda was part of it. The province of Vicenza has joined in, based on the success of this traditional event that has been going on for years at Breganze and Higher Vicentino. This year the event was featuring new contents, among them the most important is the tenth anniversary of the “new” Laverda. Actually, market and product relaunching of this company - both historical and modern at the same time - goes back exactly ten years. Visitors of the production facilities could notice the upgrading that is taking place to have AGCO granting Laverda the production of 8 walker and hybrid combines, that perfectly fit in with Laverda’s models.

Congratulations Laverda for these 10 years!
In order to attract local visitors and promote industrial tourism beyond the province borders, this year Vicenza’s Council has joined the event promoting ad hoc communication initiatives and has involved Vicenza and Breganze’s councils, as well as those of Nove and Montecchio Maggiore, through agreements with the most important category associations: Manufacturer’s Association, SMEs, Artisans Associations and CNA. Laverda has already tried this mechanism and also this time a large number of visitors have arrived.

It is also worth visiting the production facilities (from 10:30 to 12:00, and from 3:00 pm till 6:00 pm): visiting a 22-acre factory is not something we can do very often (60,000 indoor square meters), where very important machines are produced, such as combines for example, which are also technologically fascinating, made up of over five thousand pieces and parts.
The main assembling line - 120 meters long- produces a complete machine every two hours and a half. To the side of the main line there are subgroup assembling lines and while the machine is moving from one station to the next, new items are assembled to it. The machine is complete by the time it leaves the last station and is ready for a thorough inspection, where every combine is tested for about three hours with rigorous control methods that guarantee product quality.

Below two images of the “Factory Open Day”.

Competition: kids’ drawings to celebrate the “new” Laverda, looking into the future

“2000-2010, 10 years: Laverda means the future”.
This was the slogan for the drawing competition for Laverda’s personnel children to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the “new” Laverda and to look into the future at the same time.
“Get your colour pencils and brushes and start to work” was the invitation of the Company to the children. The drawings were displayed at Laverda on June 13th at the “Factory Open Day”.
The judges have selected some works that will be published in the next edition of Laverda World and they will make us remember this birthday through the years.
Taking off: Falco F8L

The Laverda aeronautics adventure of the 60’s

Breganze, garden of Villa Ronzani-Laverda, summer of 1964. Two figures stand at the gate of the big house close to the square, where Francesco Laverda and his large family live. They are Flaminio Piccoli and Mariano Rumor, who at the time were two political leaders of the provinces of Trento and Vicenza respectively. Francesco welcomes them under the shadow of two high pines, and they offer him the management of the Caproni de Trento aeronautics and motorcycle facilities which at the time was going through a terrible financial crisis and owned by the autonomous province of Trento.

Francesco, names Massimo, his son, director of Moto Laverda SAS, a company that he had founded fifteen years earlier and accepts the challenge with great enthusiasm, evaluating possible solutions.

This is how Laverda Trento SPA was created and its original main shareholders are the five family members who already owned the other two companies part of the group.

The purpose of the acquisition is the Gardolo aeronautical workshop in northern Trento, where two hundred employees - in addition to the assembly of Capriolo mopeds - build, under Aviamilano license, the fast tourism plane: Falco F8L. Francesco immediately evaluates the plant’s production capabilities, and making use of the aeronautical technology, especially wood, chipboard and light alloys for plane construction, starts producing camping caravans.

At the same time, the Laverda group installed a new smelter on one side of the hangars to replace Breganze’s, now obsolete ones. Between 1964 and 1968, Gardolo continues to build the IV series of Falco F8L planes, a total of 20 machines that are added to the 20 already produced by Aviamilano, and to the 35 produced in Trento by Aeromere-Caproni. After completing this series, and due to high production costs deriving mainly from wood structure, and a difficult market situation, the company was forced to cease aeronautical production to concentrate its efforts on the free-time vehicle industry - expanding rapidly at the time - and production in Breganze.

In fact at that time Trento started producing the Velox belt tedder rakes and continued to smelt parts for the new combines. The presence of Laverda in Trento continues for twenty years, with different caravan models that set a trend in Italy based on innovative design and high quality.

The plane

Falco F8L is a two-seater low-wing monoplane for tourism and training, also ideal for stunts, designed by engineer Stelio Frati, one of the most outstanding post-war Italian aeronautical engineers, creator, among others, of the Siai Marchetti SF 260 aircraft, Italy’s most famous training plane.

For its sensible and elegant design, the project was awarded the “Compasso d’oro” in 1961. The plane is made almost entirely out of wood, single wing integral with the fuselage, retractable landing gear and a 160 hp Lycoming engine reaching 325km per hour. With a full tank it can cover a direct trip from Rome to Paris in just over 4 hours, crossing the Alps in straight line at 290 km/h cruise speed. Due to its sporty characteristics, Falco F8L has taken part, as it still does today, in tourism plane competitions and demonstrations with great results.

The two crew members can sit side by side in the cabin, with double command and there is also a third provisional seat that is generally used for luggage. There is a high class finish, as one would expect in such a classy plane, and the instrumental arrangement of the cabin has a work-of-art feeling.

Just remembering that the Falco was called “the Ferrari of the sky” should be enough to imagine the characteristics and qualities of the aircraft. Even today, half a century after its first flight, it is still one the most wanted aircrafts by enthusiasts. After production ceased in Italy in 1977, Stelio Fratti passed the license to the Sequoia Aircraft Company of Richmond, Virginia (USA), which, after several years of preparation, started the
Apart from the 75 original planes, hundreds of aircrafts were built by enthusiasts, especially in North America, using designs and prefabricated parts. “Falco Club” was founded in Italy in 1978 and it regularly organises presentations and meet-ups. For example in the 2006 meeting in Trento, 19 Falcos landed at a short distance from their original birth place.

Piergiorgio Laverda

### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF LAVERDA FALCO F8L IV SERIES

**Number Of Seats (total)** n. 2+1  
**Length** 6,5 m  
**Wings** 8.0 m  
**Wingspan** 10,00 mq  
**Weight when empty** 550 kg  
**Maximum Take Off Weight** 820 kg  
**Engine** Lycoming O-320-B3B, four horizontally opposed cylinders, power160 hp  
**Hartzell** variable pitch propeller  

**Max speed** 320 km/h  
**Cruise speed** 290 km/h  
**Min. speed** 95 km/h  
**Efficiency** 1400 km  
**Take off space** 170 m  
**Landing space** 200 m  
**Tangency** 6000 m
Farm tourism, a growing business

Italian farm tourism is working. Promoted by women and Tuscany “the agriculture queen”.

Agriculture is in decline, but in spite of this farming is still the base for new businesses. This includes niche products launching, revaluation of “carbon neutral” products after so many years of praising globalization and tourism connected to agriculture. This very last sector, not totally ”new”, but moving towards new goals, is growing in Italy, thanks to an alternative offer and costly and localised gastronomy. In just a few years it has made huge steps forward: almost twenty thousand new businesses have opened at present, having just over ten thousand in 2001. Growth that has also copied European models, as in countries like Austria, Switzerland and France, culture of hospitality connected to agriculture is well developed, but it has also been planned following original models. It has probably consolidated thanks to the beauty of ranches and for the competitiveness of this system, in comparison to the standard Italian accommodation, that is in general pricy.

Data provided by the Italian Institute of Statistics is definitely positive. Looking at last year’s figures, we can see that there is a significant growth in farms authorised to do farm tourism of +4.3%, with 17,720 businesses operating last year, to 18,480 at the time of the recounting, showing a growth of 760 new operators. In detail: ”the horses that pulled the growth cart” were restoration (+4.8% with 412 operators), accommodation (+3.5% with 512 operators), while as a whole, other activities that offer sport tourism (horse riding, hiking, sightseeing, trekking, mountain biking, courses, sports) have increased to 6.6%, having 639 authorizations.

45% of tourism farms are located in the north, 35% in the centre, and 20% in southern Italy. Women administration in tourism farms is really strong, reaching 35%. In this Italian environment, Tuscany is the “queen”, because of the number of businesses operating - over four thousand - 1 out of 4 in Italy and also because of the high number of farm restaurants that offer outdoor and sport attractions. Tuscany is in the lead of “pink quotas” in company management, having about 1,700 businesses managed by women, more than 25% of the national total amount. The Tuscan model should be taken into account, as it can be used as a guide for the industry. After a long boom period, there has been a growth in arrivals, but not in stay (i.e. actual stay days), figures that show that Italian families prefer short stays. Over the last years the number of foreign visitors decreased, but it was offset by the number of Italian tourists. Also to consider is the fact that the average vacation period has moved through the years from 5.6 nights (2003), to about 5 nights. Stays at farm tourism sites is still one night above the average of the group of receiving businesses. In short, more tourists, but for shorter periods of time. Of all of the foreign tourists, the number of Germans coming to visit has declined, although they are still in the lead, representing 30% of the total. As a comparison, in the last few years more French, Swiss and Dutch tourists have arrived and at the same time the number of visitors from the other side of the ocean has shown a significant growth: flights from the USA and Canada bring visitors that stay at rural accommodations. Even better if this happens in Tuscany.